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Michigan Wine Consumers Forgotten as Special Interests Get Protection from the State Says SWRA

—State’s Appeal of Wine Shipping Case Slap in the Face To Michigan Consumers and Hurts State Tax Coffers—

(Sacramento, Calif)—Michigan consumers suffered a blow on behalf of cronyism, protectionism and politics when the state Attorney General filed a notice recently to appeal a Federal District Court ruling that determined the state’s law against purchasing wine from out-of-state retailers was unconstitutional, said Specialty Wine Retailers Association in an statement today.

The State’s appeal in the case of *Siesta Village Market v. Granholm* will prevent Michigan wine consumers from finally being able to access the wines they want and will cost Michigan residents hundreds of thousands of in legal fees. Specialty Wine Retailers Association (SWRA) condemned the cynical, anti-consumer action today as nothing more than an attempt to payoff and protect the state’s privileged alcohol wholesalers (huge campaign contributors and participants in the case) who benefit by forcing Michigan consumers to only purchase wines the distributors themselves decide to sell to retailers and restaurateurs.

CONSUMER NEED TO DEMAND PROTECTION FROM SPECIAL INTERESTS

“Michigan residents and wine lovers in particular should immediately demand the Attorney General and their representatives in the state legislature take steps to protect consumer rights rather than the financial interests of the small, well-heeled cabal of wine distributors who control consumer choice in the state,” said Tom Wark, executive director of SWRA. “Immediate legislation allowing consumers to purchase and have wine shipped to them from retailers across the country that also provides for collection of state taxes is the rational, pro-consumer and pro-Michigan step that needs to be taken, not wasting state funds on a fruitless legal appeal.”

The recent Federal Court ruling held that Michigan’s law that allows the state’s consumers to have wine shipped to them by in-state wine merchants but not out-of-state wine merchants was unconstitutional. This is the second time Michigan’s discriminatory and protectionist alcohol laws have been deemed unconstitutional. The first time led to the *Granholm v. Heald* Supreme Court decision upon which this latest ruling was based.

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IF CONSUMERS CAN BUY FROM WINERIES, WHY NOT RETAILERS?

Michigan passed a law in 2005 that finally allowed Michigan consumers to have wine shipped to them from out-of-state wineries, but failed to provide consumers with the same right to purchase wine from out-of-state wine merchants. A condition of the 2005 consumer winery shipping law requires out-of-state wineries to issue reports to the state, assure that the packages are signed for by an adult and pay sales and excise taxes to the state.

“There is no reason why the state legislature could not once again stand up for free trade and Michigan consumers by passing legislation allowing the state’s consumers to purchase wine from out-of-state retailers” said Wark. “The result would be to give consumers real access to legal products, fix the unconstitutional laws and increase tax dollars for state programs, rather than protecting Michigan alcohol distributors who have, collectively, given more than \$2.3 million to Michigan politicians since 2000.”

Specialty Wine Retailers Association is a national organization of fine wine retailers, wine clubs, auction houses and consumers that advocate for fair and well-regulated wine shipping laws. For more information about SWRA see <http://www.specialtywineretailers.org> .

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